





Flint Rising Initiative

Purpose

Flint Rising is a five-year initiative to guide a community-driven effort to balance development and conservation within the Upper Flint River region of Georgia with an initial focus on Fayette and Coweta Counties. It establishes shared goals, actionable strategies, and measurable outcomes to ensure that growth in the region elevates—rather than diminishes—the natural systems that sustain local communities.

Vision Statement

A thriving area where community-driven conservation, responsible development, and ecological resilience rise together.

Mission Statement

To bring the community together to **elevate nature** by promoting balanced growth, encouraging conservation, restoring ecosystems, and empowering collaboration across the region.

Core Values

- **Stewardship** – Protecting the region's greenspaces and watersheds for current and future generations.
 - **Collaboration** – Working across sectors, counties, and communities.
 - **Balance** – Supporting development that respects the natural environment.
 - **Equity** – Ensuring all communities benefit from healthy natural resources.
 - **Education** – Building awareness and inspiring action.
 - **Resilience** – Strengthening the greenspaces and watershed's ability to adapt and thrive.
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Strategic Priorities (2025–2030)

1. Promote Balanced and Sustainable Growth

Objectives

- Integrate conservation into regional planning, zoning, and development.
- Provide tools, standards, and incentives for responsible growth.
- Preserve critical greenspaces, floodplains, and natural corridors.

Key Strategies

- Partner with local governments to adopt watershed-friendly development guidelines.
- Develop a Flint Rising “Sustainable Growth Toolkit” for planners, developers, and builders.
- Advocate for conservation subdivisions, green infrastructure, and low-impact development.
- Map priority conservation zones and distribute to municipalities and developers.

Success Measures

- 5 municipalities adopt conservation-oriented planning policies.
 - 2,500 acres of priority lands protected through easements or public greenspace.
 - 3 major development projects incorporate *Flint Rising* recommendations.
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2. Strengthen the Health of local watersheds

Objectives

- Improve water quality and stream health.
- Restore critical habitats and degraded river segments.
- Promote nature-based solutions for flood resilience.



Key Strategies

- Implement annual restoration projects (streambank repair, native plantings, riparian buffers).
- Launch a Watershed Health Monitoring Program with local universities.
- Support municipal adoption of green stormwater infrastructure.
- Partner with agricultural stakeholders to reduce runoff and protect headwaters.

Success Measures

- Water quality improvements in priority reaches.
 - 15 community-led restoration projects completed.
 - 2500 acres of positively impacted greenspaces/watersheds
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3. Elevate Community Engagement, Education & Awareness

Objectives

- Build a culture of stewardship across the watershed.
- Provide accessible education to residents, students, and local leaders.
- Increase participation in conservation and planning.

Key Strategies

- Launch the "Flint Rising Ambassador Program" for community volunteers.
- Host quarterly educational workshops and field days.
- Develop K–12 curriculum modules on watershed science and civic stewardship.
- Create a public awareness campaign: *"Let the Flint Rise."*

Success Measures

- 500+ residents are engaged annually.
 - 200 trained Flint Rising Ambassadors.
 - K–12 programs implemented in 20 schools.
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4. Build and Strengthen Partnerships

Objectives

- Unite conservation groups, governments, businesses, and academic partners.
- Encourage collaborative initiatives that maximize impact.

Key Strategies

- Create a multi-county Flint Rising Leadership Council.
- Establish annual cross-sector roundtables.
- Secure MOUs with at least 10 partner organizations.

Success Measures

- 20 active interdisciplinary partnerships.
- 1 annual Flint Rising Summit with 200+ attendees.

5. Champion the areas greenspaces, rivers and streams as Cultural and Economic Assets

Objectives

- Highlight the greenspaces and river's role in recreation, health, and local economies.
- Expand access to quality greenspaces and natural areas.

Key Strategies

- Develop a "Flint River Experience Map" featuring parks, trails, and history.
- Support local tourism initiatives highlighting the watershed.
- Promote outdoor recreation infrastructure and public access.



Success Measures

- 4 new or enhanced public access points preferably along the Line Creek, Chattahoochee, Whitewater Creek and Flint Rivers.
 - Increase outdoor recreation participation by 25%.
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Implementation Plan

Year 1 (2026)

- Establish Flint Rising Stakeholder Council.
- Conduct listening sessions and community forums.
- Produce Sustainable Growth Toolkit (Draft 1).
- Convene first Flint Rising Leadership Forum on 11/2/2026.
- Launch Conservation Easement Assistance Fund on 7/1/2026.

Year 2–3 (2027–2028)

- Launch pilot community stewardship projects.
- Begin priority restoration projects.
- Roll out Ambassador Program and K–12 curriculum.
- Work with municipalities on policy adoption.

Year 4–5 (2029–2030)

- Expand regional adoption of conservation-development practices.
 - Scale restoration and monitoring programs.
 - Publish a mid- and end-of-plan progress report.
 - Evaluate economic impacts of conservation-focused planning.
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Organizational Structure

- **Stakeholder Council** – cross-sector governing body.
 - **Working Groups:**
 - Sustainable Growth & Planning
 - Restoration & Resilience
 - Community Engagement & Education
 - Partnerships & Economic Development
 - **Staff & Volunteers** – operational implementation.
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Funding Model

- Public and private grants.
 - County and municipal partnerships.
 - Corporate sponsorships.
 - Individual giving.
 - Event revenue (summit, workshops, tours).
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Communications & Branding

- Unified messaging around “Let’s Rise Up and Elevate Nature.”
 - Modern, recognizable Flint Rising visual identity.
 - Social media, local media, and grassroots engagement.
 - Quarterly progress updates and annual reports.
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Risk Mitigation

- Political shifts → diversify partnerships across counties.
 - Development pressure → emphasize balanced growth, not anti-growth.
 - Funding gaps → multi-source fundraising strategy.
 - Community fatigue → strong volunteer stewardship culture.
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Evaluation & Reporting

- Annual metrics reviewed by Leadership Council.
 - Public annual progress report.
 - Continuous feedback from community stakeholders.
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The Flint Rising Initiative offers a bold, collaborative pathway to preserve the ecological integrity of the Upper Flint River region while supporting a vibrant, growing region. By elevating nature, communities elevate themselves—creating a resilient, prosperous future where the watershed and its people rise together.